



## Obstructive Sleep Apnea

Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) is a serious sleep disorder that causes a person to stop breathing while they sleep. During sleep, muscles relax allowing the tongue to fall back to the throat causing an obstruction of air flow to the lungs. This temporary pause in breathing is called an apnea. It may cause a person to snore or make choking noises. Apneas decrease the amount of oxygen to the body and brain. A lack of oxygen may cause a person to awaken during the night and be the reason why you feel fatigued during the day. Over time, this lack of oxygen to the body and brain can increase the risk or worsen serious health conditions such as high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, diabetes and depression.

### How do I know if I have OSA?

An overnight sleep study will determine if you have OSA. You can complete a sleep study at home using VA equipment or be scheduled for an in-lab study.

### The Sleep Study Program Process:

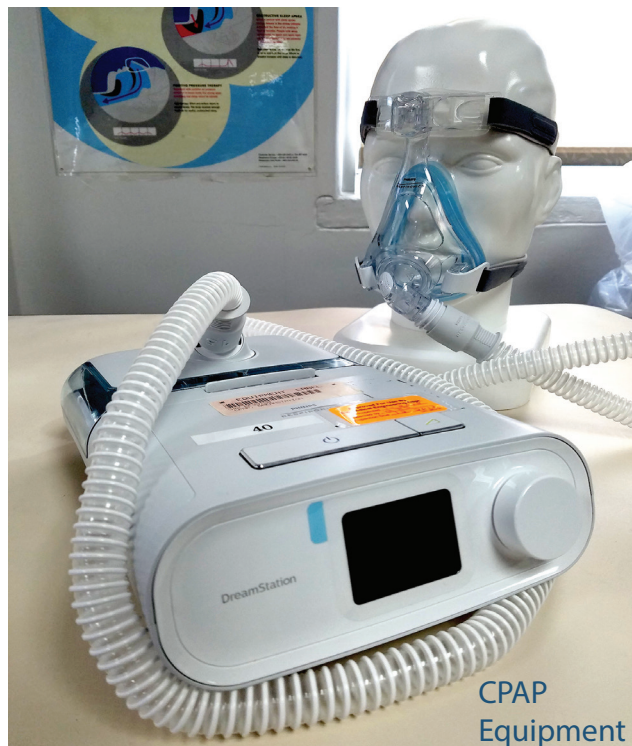
- The doctor submits a consult to refer the Veteran to a sleep study specialist for an evaluation. The consult is sent to Respiratory Therapy (RT), where an appointment is scheduled for a sleep study education and test.

- During the first scheduled appointment, the Veteran comes in for an education and to receive the portable sleep monitor to take home. Thereafter, the Veteran connects the portable sleep monitor at home and goes to sleep to complete the overnight diagnostic sleep study.



Portable sleep monitor kit:

- One nasal cannula
- Chest & abdominal belts
- Pulse oximeter



CPAP Equipment

- The following day, the Veteran returns the sleep monitor equipment.
- A week later the Veteran receives the results from the Sleep Study.
  - ✓ Once the study is read by the Philadelphia Sleep physicians, the RT calls the Veteran with their results.
- If the results are positive coordination is made to supply the Veteran with a Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) machine.
  - ✓ The VA provides CPAP supplies (masks, tubing and filters) every 6 months.
  - ✓ Veterans can contact the Respiratory Care department for equipment and supplies at 610-384-7711 ext. 3934. After hours/weekends or holidays call ext. 3933.

### Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP)

The CPAP provides a gentle flow of air pressure through your nose using a mask. The air pressure prevents airway collapse allowing you to breathe while you sleep.

For more information or questions please contact one of our Respiratory Therapists at 610-384-7711 ext. 3934.

## VA MISSION ACT

### Does this Mission Act Brochure look familiar to you?

Please contact Kirk Fernitz at 610-380-4348 to receive a copy. The MISSION Act rolled out on June 6, 2019 and is the new/improved Community Care Program.

Under the VA MISSION Act, the VA will:

- Continue to provide you with an excellent health care experience
- Deliver the right care, at the right time, at the right place
- Continue to offer care through telehealth in your home, in a VA facility, or in the community
- Provide more options for health care, including community care and urgent/walk-in care

The MISSION Act empowers Veterans to have more options in their health care decision and is NOT about privatizing the VA.

For more information visit:  
[www.missionact.va.gov](http://www.missionact.va.gov)

**Enhanced VA Options Under the MISSION Act:**  
IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR VETERANS



## Enrollment & Eligibility Questions?

- **Eligibility & Enrollment Coordinators are in Building 1, Room 121**
- **Medical Benefits Orientations are held every 4th Thursday/Monthly 2-4 pm, Building 2, Room 208B**

## Can't Make Your Scheduled Appointment

**Please call the Call Center at 610-383-0239 when you can't make your appointment. When you don't call to cancel, a fellow Veteran misses a chance to be scheduled.**

**Join the medical center as we go smoke free on October 1, 2019.**

### Recent Office Moves:

- Eligibility/Enrollment, bldg. 1, room 121  
◊ Includes: Means Testing, Veterans ID Card
- Decedent Affairs, bldg. 1, room 121
- VA Veterans Benefit Counselor, bldg. 1, room 121
- Veterans Service Officers, bldg. 1, room 121
- Veterans Transportation Service, bldg. 1, room 121
- DAV Transportation, bldg. 4, room 214B
- Medical Records/Release of Information, bldg. 4, room 214C
- Memory Clinic & Geriatric Clinic, bldg. 4, room 203
- Mobile Veterans Program, bldg. 4, room 220
- Privacy/FOIA Officer, bldg. 38, room 118B

## New Literature Workshop for Veterans

February 8, a new program began in the inpatient post-traumatic stress (PTSD) unit. Designed as a literature workshop for Veterans coping with the challenges of PTSD, the program involves reading and discussing Homer's epic the Odyssey, which tells of the Greek hero Odysseus's arduous, ten-year journey from the battlefields of Troy back to his homeland of Ithaca and the challenges of reclaiming his country from invaders once he returns. Although the epic tale is well over two thousand years old, Veterans in the program have had no trouble relating to Odysseus's struggles, which range from battling monsters (both external and internal) to regaining a sense of trust in other people and reacclimating to a peacetime environment.

The discussions, which begin every Friday morning at 9am, are led by Dr. Shanyn Fiske, a literature professor at Rutgers University (Camden). Fiske facilitates the discussion as a badged volunteer and hopes to continue with other pieces of literature after the Odyssey discussions conclude. She also hopes to expand the literature workshop both to other residential units as well as develop it into an outpatient program that would run concurrently with the inpatient group.



## A Veteran's Story

The silent wounds of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) come with many different challenges and Marine/Army Veteran Jason Harrar certainly has faced his share of battles with PTSD.

Jason enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1996 and throughout his 13 years of military service he deployed four times to support missions in Afghanistan and Iraq.

After returning from his last deployment in 2006, PTSD was silently taking over Jason's well-being, triggering his anxiety levels that led to frictions at work and at home.

Jason's life was spiraling out of control, catapulting him into the dark depressive stages of his life and leaving him hopeless to live. During this volatile time and despite medical attention, Jason attempted suicide twice.

In October 2009, Jason completed his commitment with the Marine Corps, receiving an honorable discharge. Using his educational benefits, Jason went to Montgomery County Community College, studying criminal justice and entering their police academy program. His transition from active duty to civilian life didn't come without challenges either, "I had a difficult time adjusting," Jason said. He started missing the military structure and comradery and decided to join the Army Reserve until 2017. "I wasn't prepared that putting on the uniform again would thrash me back to having PTSD." Jason ultimately sought help from the Philadelphia and Coatesville VA Medical Centers. "The VA was a big help in my recovery process," Jason commented, "I'm better now, but it's a process." Another outlet for Jason was his desire to keep physically active, exercising and becoming a marathon runner. "A running buddy of mine encouraged me to connect with the Tails of Valor service dog training program," said Jason, "and eventually I did." Jason joined the Tails of Valor as a volunteer dog handler and was paired up to train Loftus (a Lab-Pitt mix). Over a short time Loftus and Jason bonded and have now become a dynamic-duo.

Eventually the Tails of Valor became a pilot program for Animal Assisted Therapy at the Coatesville VA Medical Center. This created an opportunity for Jason to accept a permanent position with Tails of Valor. Jason's goal is to help hospitalized Veterans with PTSD issues and change their lives for the better. "I want Veterans to know that it is Ok to not be Ok," explained Jason, "Veterans need to feel free to open up and not be afraid of being judged." Jason believes wholeheartedly that he wouldn't be here if it hadn't been for the Tails of Valor program.

Jason finally found his purpose in life again and enjoys his life, family, new home and job.



### Canine Connections/Tails of Valor

For some Veterans, their closest companion is a service dog. Service dogs help Veterans who suffer from traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress, depression, mobility issues and plain coping with everyday activities. The primary purpose of Tails of Valor is to train dogs and provide non-medicinal therapy to the Veteran who is paired-up with a dog. Volunteers of the Tails of Valor work with Veterans in the Canine Connections Program of the Coatesville VAMC. All the dogs involved in the program are named after service members or Veterans who have lost their lives while on or off military duty. Dogs selected to become service dogs are typically seven months and younger, and are housed at a training facility in Quakertown. Veterans selected to participate in this program usually spend one hour per week for up to 12 weeks with hands-on training sessions with the dogs. Training sessions entail handling exercises, basic commands, public access and submissive training. Veterans are encouraged to utilize the program to create motivation for greater goals and clinicians have seen tremendous progress in our Veterans' ability to think about their goals in a way that highlights value.

To be considered for the Canine Connections program, Veterans must be referred by their provider or psychologist and upon selection are then linked-up with Jason Harrar a USMC/Army Veteran himself, who is the dog trainer for Tails of Valor. Jason brings two dogs to the Coatesville VAMC, twice a week (Wednesdays/Fridays) for basic handling and socialization exercises.

To learn more about the program, please contact Dr. Gabrielle Sassone, Laura Henry, or Jason Harrar at 610-384-7711 ext. 6818.



Confidential chat at  
**VeteransCrisisLine.net**  
or text to **838255**

## Coatesville Primary Care Clinic

**24 Hour Call Line 610-384-7711**

May enter the below numbers at any time during the call

- **Press #1 - Refill Medications**
- **Press #2 - Schedule or Cancel an appointment**
- **Press #3 - Speak to a Registered Nurse for health-related concerns**

Connect with us at  
[www.coatesville.va.gov](http://www.coatesville.va.gov) and on Facebook



## Upcoming Veteran Enrollment & Information Events

- Sept. 14 from 11am-4pm, at **Montgomery County Community College**, Blue Bell, PA
- Sept. 20 from 11am-3pm, at **Oxford Masonic Lodge**, Oxford, PA
- Oct. 18 from 11am-3pm, at **North Wales Borough Hall**, North Wales, PA

**For more details visit our website at**  
**[www.coatesville.va.gov](http://www.coatesville.va.gov) or call 610-380-4348**

